

Minutes of the  
Edina Park Board  
August 12, 2008  
Edina City Hall, Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Hulbert, Rob Presthus, Randy Meyer, Howard Merriam, George Klus, Dan Peterson, Jeff Sorem, Ray O'Connell, Todd Fronck

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Damman, Carolyn Nelson

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Janet Canton, Ed MacHolda, John Valliere

**I. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 10, 2008 PARK BOARD MINUTES**

George Klus MOVED TO APPROVE THE JUNE 10, 2008 PARK BOARD MINUTES.  
Jeff Sorem SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Braemar Golf Course Special Needs Program - John Valliere, Manager of Braemar Golf Course, introduced Paige Safranski and Susan Hagel from the Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. Mr. Valliere, Ms. Safranski and Ms. Hagel gave the Park Board an overview of the golf program held at Braemar Golf Course for golfers with disabilities.

Mr. Klus asked Mr. Valliere if the rounds are down much this summer to which he replied yes, they are. Mr. Valliere explained that April and May were tough months across the whole state. He noted that currently they are approximately 2,000 rounds down on the regulation course and approximately 1,500 rounds down on the two executive courses.

- B. Public Hearing and Notification Policy – Mr. Keprios reminded the Park Board that they had asked staff to develop and recommend a public hearing and notification policy for their consideration. Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that a questionnaire was sent to 600 professional Park and Recreation people throughout Minnesota regarding public hearings and notification policies. He explained that from the responses received they really could not identify any agency that has a formal Public Hearing or notification policy when it comes to Park and Recreation matters. Mr. Keprios pointed out that the protocol that is followed varies from one department to the next.

Mr. Keprios indicated that it struck him that there are so many variables when it comes to Park and Recreation type improvements, issues and developments that it would be too difficult to foresee all of the things that could stand in the way. He noted that it would be tough to come up with an all inclusive policy. Mr. Keprios stated that the action he would ask for is to leave it to the discretion of the staff with the caveat that staff will bring everything to the Park Board for their response to decide on a case by case basis.

Mr. Meyer asked if there are any written policies so that the public has access to understand what processes are used to make decisions. Mr. Keprios replied there is no written policy.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he likes staff's recommendation. Mr. Sorem commented that he also agrees with staff's recommendation to not have a formal policy. Mr. Peterson noted that the only thing he would suggest is to put up some posters at a couple of spots along the park a week before the hearing so that everyone will see the notice and remember.

Mr. Klus commented that he would agree with the recommendation and doesn't feel that there needs to be a formal policy in terms of public hearings.

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the City Council has discussed this in the past with regards to public hearings and the way they want to handle it for Park and Recreation matters is on a case by case basis. He noted that the City Council will ultimately decide on a case by case basis whether they will conduct a public hearing on a Park Board issue regardless if the Park Board has already conducted one or not.

Mr. Merriam stated that it sounds like the work is already being done if the City Council has already made that decision. He noted that he accepts staff's recommendation in terms of public hearings.

Mr. Meyer indicated that he thinks it's important to distinguish between notification and public hearings. He stated that he thinks it's important we notify the public that it may be nothing more than requesting a written feedback or telling them who they can communicate with. He stated that they may not always be asking for a public hearing. He commented that he thinks they need to know when it is appropriate just to let the neighbors know when we are doing something. We need to know what is appropriate for a particular situation and once we receive a lot of feedback we may decide it's time to hold a hearing. He added that it is not always clear on where the differentiation is.

Mr. Presthus and Mr. Hulbert both liked the recommendation.

Mr. Fronek stated that he agrees the policy looks great. He commented that he thinks everyone is in agreement to keep the policy on a case by case basis. He indicated that the main thing is to have communication either through notification or a public hearing. Mr. Fronek suggested that they also have updates on the city website as far as what is happening within the city.

- C. MN-Dot Community Landscape Partnership Program – Mr. Hulbert gave a brief overview of the MnDOT Community Landscape Partnership Program. He stated that after having done this he would like to encourage other people to try to do it as well because there are other intersections in MN-Dot parcels of land around the community that could really be improved.

Mr. Merriam asked if this needs to be a citizen initiated project to which Mr. Hulbert replied that is correct. He explained that there is a cooperative agreement going on

between the City and MN-Dot. Mr. Merriam asked if the city crew's help with this to which Mr. Hulbert replied no, it is all volunteers who are responsible for the maintenance.

- D. Artificial Turf vs. Natural Turf – Mr. MacHolda informed the Park Board that it's not his intent to make a recommendation on artificial turf versus natural turf because they both have their merits. Mr. MacHolda went through the pros and cons of both artificial and natural turf.

Mr. Klus asked Mr. Meyer, Chairman of the Board of Education, to bring the Park Board up-to-date as to what the discussions have been on artificial surfaces on school property. Mr. Meyer replied he would like to make a couple of comments. He noted that one of the things they learned in looking at artificial fields is that something needs to be put around artificial turf. Secondly, as far as drainage issues they need to make sure that water flows through these mats and into the soil, which has not been an issue for them.

Mr. Meyer stated that in reality natural grass is a little less expensive, however, if you factor into these numbers that you need twice the surface area you would probably come out ahead with artificial turf. Mr. Meyer commented that one more thing to consider is that because this is a newer product they still don't know what the "real" life of the turf is, is it 10, 15, etc. and at what point do you need to put in a new mat. Mr. Meyer informed the Park Board that they are looking at all of the fields around the high school and below the high school as potential places to put in artificial turf. He stated that they are also looking at the football practice field, McCarthy field. Mr. Meyer indicated that at this point they do not have funding. However, there has been some discussion about other potential sources of dollars. Mr. Meyer commented there are several options they would like to pursue if they could find the funding.

- E. Off-Leash Dog Park Proposal – Creek Valley Park – Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board staff's concept of using the hockey rink at Creek Valley Park during the spring, summer and fall as an off-leash dog park for small dogs only. He noted that he has received several requests to have a small dog park in Edina. Mr. Keprios stated that in the 2006 Needs Assessment Survey the results showed that 5,480 households have a need for an off-leash dog park. Mr. Keprios pointed out that he would like to change his recommendation: the weight should read 25 lbs. or less instead of 20 lbs. He noted that after doing more research he found that most communities throughout the country are right around 25 lbs. or less.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he thinks Creek Valley would be a good place to start an off-leash dog park within the hockey rink. He added that this site was recommended by a consultant that did the feasibility study some years ago that could be considered as part of an off-leash dog area. Mr. Keprios suggested that if they find it successful enough then maybe they could expand on it and also have a large dog area separate from the hockey rink, that's another alternative in the future. Mr. Keprios stated that what he is proposing is to go ahead and conduct a hearing on the matter and have that be held at a Park Board meeting to receive input from the community.

Mr. Meyer asked what the requirement is to get an off-leash dog park approved. Mr. Keprios replied that it would require City Council approval but that they would be looking for Park Board's recommendation.

Mr. Hulbert indicated that speaking from somebody who uses the hockey rink during the summer months hosting youth soccer practices, those rinks do get used quite a bit during the summer. He stated that he thinks there are going to be some families that live in that area and don't have dogs that are going to be a little disappointed that they may lose that recreation area.

Mr. Meyer asked with the current dog park what level of activity is there during the winter to which Mr. Keprios replied it goes down slightly but that he was actually amazed how much it is used during the winter.

Mr. Merriam noted that he can see there is a need but he also thinks it's a good gesture by the city to try to address the need because he thinks there are some issues that they will need to talk through.

Mr. Sorem stated that he definitely likes the location of Creek Valley. He stated that he also likes the idea of doing this on a trial basis because it doesn't seem like a very costly thing to set up. He noted that this way they can see just what the demand is for a small dog park. He commented that if it's a success then they could put in something more permanent and get away from the use of the hockey rink during the summer.

Mr. Fronek stated that he thinks this is a great idea. He noted that one piece of information that might be nice to have would be to figure out a cost for the Creek Valley site, not a hard cost, but something to consider if they could build a small and large dog park there so that perhaps they wouldn't have to use the hockey rink. Mr. Fronek indicated that he thinks it's a great idea to have a public hearing.

George Klus MOVED THAT PARK BOARD CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING TO HAVE AN OFF-LEASH SMALL DOG PARK AT CREEK VALLEY PARK. Howard Merriam SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

### III. UPDATES FROM STAFF

- A. McGuire Park – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the work at McGuire Park has been completed. He noted that it's the only playground in Edina that has artificial turf as a safety surface. He added that it's an outstanding design, wonderful equipment and has been getting great reviews.
- B. York Park – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the playground equipment at York Park is under construction and that Mr. MacHolda did a magnificent job in working with the neighborhood on this project. He noted that they've decided they want to experiment with a wood fiber safety surface. This should be completed within the next couple of weeks.

- C. Courtney Maintenance Building - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that this project is just about done with the exception of a few minor punch list items to finish off.
- D. Pamela Park – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the Pamela Park lighting project has been awarded and construction will begin next week. He pointed out that the neighbors within 1,000 feet of the park have been notified of the project.
- E. Edinborough Park - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the ventilation system for the Edinborough pool has been awarded by the City Council and that construction will begin later this fall/winter.

#### IV. **PARK BOARD COMMENTS**

- A. Braemar Park – Mr. O’Connell informed the Park Board that he recently gave a tour of Braemar Park to people from the Community Education Services Board. He noted that the tour encompassed the whole park and not just the golf course. Mr. O’Connell stated that it was such a huge success that the publicist for Community Education wanted to know how they could promote this concept. Mr. O’Connell indicated that it gave him a lot of ideas and concepts of how they could utilize this tour. He noted that Mr. Hughes and Mr. Valliere both liked the idea of it. Mr. O’Connell pointed out one thing they can do with this tour is in essence promote the parks and its natural areas. He noted that Mr. Hughes has already said that he would like to see if they could set this up with the various commissions and boards as far as the city is concerned. Mr. O’Connell indicated that the idea would be to suddenly and subliminally educate these people as to what our parks are by using Braemar Park as an example because it would just lend itself to a nice tour.
- B. Nan - Mr. Klus pointed out that there was a very nice article in the Star Tribune on the Braemar Golf Course dog Nan.
- C. Tim Zimmerman - Mr. Fronek pointed out that there was a nice article about Tim Zimmerman in the Sun Current this past week and added that he does a wonderful job with all of the flowers in the parks.
- D. Student Member - Mr. Fronek stated that he would like to honor the Park Board’s student member, Carolyn Nelson. Unfortunately, Ms. Nelson was unable to attend her last meeting. He noted that starting next month Benjamin Fox Pobuda will be the new student Park Board member.
- E. Bicycle Task Force - Mr. Fronek informed the Park Board that Mr. Hulbert has been gracious enough to volunteer to be the Park Board’s liaison to the Edina Bicycle Task Force committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm